

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A valve-operating lever comprising:  
a valve arm including a first aperture defining a valve arm engagement portion;  
a connector member;  
a first stop integrally-formed as part of ~~cooperating with~~ the connector member to at least partially define a first engagement portion, the valve arm engagement portion engaging the first engagement portion; and  
a second stop integrally-formed as part of the connector member and positioned such that the valve arm is sandwiched between the first stop and the second stop, the first stop and second stop in contact with the valve arm to inhibit movement of the valve arm along a longitudinal axis defined by the connector member.
2. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the first aperture is substantially circular.
3. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the connector member includes a cylindrical tube.
4. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the first stop includes a first reduced-diameter portion that defines a first shoulder.

5. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the valve arm defines a valve arm thickness and wherein the first engagement portion defines an axial length that is at least as great as the valve arm thickness.

6. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the valve arm is formed from a stamped metal.

7. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein at least one of the valve arm engagement portion and the first engagement portion includes knurls.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, further comprising a follower arm including a second aperture defining a follower arm engagement portion.

10. (Previously Presented) The valve-operating lever of claim 9, wherein the follower arm includes a follower surface adapted to engage a cam surface.

11. (Previously Presented) The valve-operating lever of claim 10, wherein the valve arm includes a valve actuating portion adapted to actuate a valve in response to movement of the follower arm.

12. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the first stop is integrally formed as part of the connector member.
13. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 12, wherein the second stop is integrally formed as part of the connector member.
14. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 13, wherein the first stop and the second stop overlay a portion of the valve arm.
15. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 13, wherein the connector member includes a third stop, the connector member and the third stop cooperating to define a second engagement portion.
16. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 15, wherein the third stop is integrally formed as part of the connector member.
17. (Original) The valve-operating lever of claim 15, wherein the third stop includes a second reduced-diameter portion that defines a second shoulder.
18. (Currently Amended) The valve-operating lever of claim 15, wherein a second portion of the connector member overlays a portion of ~~the follower~~ a follower arm adjacent the second aperture, and the follower arm ~~engagement portion~~ engages the second engagement portion.

19. (Previously Presented) The valve-operating lever of claim 15, wherein at least one of the first engagement portion and the second engagement portion includes a portion having knurls.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The valve-operating lever of claim 15, ~~wherein the~~ further comprising a follower arm that defines a follower arm thickness, and wherein the second engagement portion defines an axial length that is at least as great as the follower arm thickness.

22. (Previously Presented) A direct lever system for an engine, the system comprising:

- a cylinder bore, the cylinder bore having an outer end;
- a cam assembly having at least one cam surface and an axis inward of the outer end of the cylinder bore;
- two valves having opened and closed positions;
- two valve stems, each valve stem attached to one of the two valves;
- a cylinder head substantially enclosing the outer end, the valves being seated in the cylinder head; and
- two pivotably mounted valve-operating levers, at least one of the valve-operating levers including,
  - a connector member having a follower arm end defining a first reduced-diameter portion and a valve arm end defining a second reduced-diameter portion separate from the first reduced-diameter portion, the connector member defining a pivot axis about which the valve-operating lever pivots;
  - a follower arm including an aperture, a portion of the connector member engaging at least a portion of the follower arm adjacent the aperture to fixedly attach the follower arm to the connector member, the follower arm having a cam follower surface in contact with the at least one cam surface; and
  - a valve arm including an aperture, a portion of the connector member engaging at least a portion of the valve arm adjacent the aperture to fixedly attach the valve arm to the connector member.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the follower arm aperture and the valve arm aperture are substantially circular.

24. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the valve arm is formed from a stamped metal.

25. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the connector member valve arm end includes a first stop.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 25, wherein the first stop includes a first shoulder at least partially defined by the first reduced-diameter portion.

27. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the valve arm defines a valve arm thickness and wherein the first reduced-diameter portion defines a first axial length that is at least as great as the valve arm thickness.

28. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the connector member valve arm end includes a first stop integrally-formed as one piece with the connector member valve arm end.

29-30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein at least one of the follower arm aperture and the follower arm end of the connector member includes knurls.

32. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein at least one of the valve arm aperture and the valve arm end of the connector member includes knurls.

33. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the connector member follower arm end includes a follower arm end stop.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 33, wherein the follower arm end stop includes a second shoulder defined by a follower arm end reduced-diameter portion.

35. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 33, wherein the follower arm defines a follower arm thickness and the second reduced-diameter portion defines a second axial length that is at least as great as the follower arm thickness.

36-63 (Canceled)

64. (New) The valve-operating lever of claim 1, wherein the first stop defines a first diameter having a first center and the second stop defines a second diameter having a second center, the first center and the second center being substantially disposed on the longitudinal axis.

65. (New) The system of claim 22, wherein the first reduced-diameter portion defines a first diameter having a first center and the second reduced-diameter portion defines a second diameter having a second center, the first center and the second center being substantially disposed on the pivot axis.



66. (New) A valve operating-lever comprising:  
a connector member including a first end and a second end and defining a longitudinal axis extending through the first end and the second end;  
a first stop positioned near the first end of the connector member;  
a second stop positioned near the first end of the connector member; and  
a valve arm fixed with respect to the connector member and at least partially positioned between the first stop and the second stop such that the first stop and the second stop cooperate to substantially prevent movement of the valve arm relative to the connector member along the longitudinal axis.

67. (New) The valve-operating lever of claim 66, wherein the first stop defines a first center and the second stop defines a second center, the first center and the second center substantially disposed on the longitudinal axis.

68. (New) The valve-operating lever of claim 66, wherein the first stop includes a shoulder and the second stop includes a lip.

69. (New) The valve-operating lever of claim 66, wherein the first stop and the second stop are integrally-formed as part of the connector member.

70. (New) The valve-operating lever of claim 66, further comprising  
a third stop positioned near the second end of the connector member;  
a fourth stop positioned near the second end of the connector member; and  
a follower arm fixed with respect to the connector member and at least partially  
positioned between the third stop and the fourth stop such that the third stop and the fourth  
stop cooperate to substantially prevent movement of the follower arm relative to the connector  
member along the longitudinal axis.

71. (New) The valve-operating lever of claim 70, wherein the first stop, the second  
stop, the third stop, and the fourth stop are integrally-formed as part of the connector member.